

Carmans Marsh Wildlife Management Area

General Information

Carmans Marsh Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is an 83-acre parcel in Swanton located on a point of land north of the Route 78 causeway between Swanton and Alburg. There is a boat launch on the north side of the road. Access to the rest of the property is via a small, gated camp road or by boat. The land is owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The northern end of the WMA is known as Sandy Point, and is a prominent feature on the shore of Lake Champlain.

History

The historically significant buildings on Sandy Point once housed a walleye hatchery. It was run by the former Federal Bureau of Sport Fisheries. It operated from the turn of the century to the 1940's. Walleye were caught and stripped of their eggs, and the eggs were hatched. The hatchery supplied fish fry for the entire northeast. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is now charged with managing the hatchery property for wildlife purposes.

Several private summer camps are located near Sandy Point. The marsh was part of a large farm owned by Mr. Carman. Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department bought it from Mr. Carman in 1976.

Habitat Features

Carmans Marsh has a variety of habitat types contained within its small area. It is mostly comprised of scrub/shrub wetland with lakeside floodplain forest inclusions. Near Route 78 there are intermittently flooded fields that support warmwater fish spawning in the spring. North of the fields is a buttonbush shrub marsh. There is a forested swamp on the east side of the property. At the northeastern edge is a marshy area along the shore of Lake Champlain, which is sheltered in a small bay.

The western shore is a river cobble shore community, which is an important nesting area for the State-endangered spiny softshell turtle. This turtle only nests on a few beaches in the northern end of the Inland Sea of Lake Champlain. Efforts are made to protect the nests from predation and human disturbance. Please obey posted signs along the beach. It is against the law to disturb or harass endangered species.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Muskrats inhabit the marshy areas of the WMA. Gray squirrels occur in the forested portions. Minks hunt in the wetlands and along the shore. Interesting small mammal species that are present, but not likely to be seen, are long-tailed weasel and star-nosed mole.

Birds Carmans Marsh is excellent waterfowl habitat and is, therefore, a popular waterfowl hunting area. The WMA offers good birding for wetland species. The buttonbush marsh and forested swamp provide cover for many small songbirds. For instance, the beautiful Baltimore oriole prefers woodlands adjacent to water. Ruffed grouse occur in the forested section.

Reptiles and Amphibians Besides the State-threatened spiny softshell turtle, there are likely to be Jefferson's, spotted, two-lined and red-backed salamanders, and wood, green, bull, northern leopard and gray tree frogs. The State-endangered western chorus frog used to occur here, but hasn't been detected in recent years.

Fish Northern pike are a particularly important game fish that spawns here. There is good fishing also for walleye, large and smallmouth bass, perch, bullhead, carp, crappie and other warmwater fish just offshore from the WMA.



Young spiny softshell turtles begin their lives by crawling to water from their nest. Lawrence Pyne photo.

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83 Acres
1:5,000



Lake Champlain



Sandy Point

To Rt 2
4.1 Miles



TOWN HWY 11

WEST SWANTON

78

To Swanton
4.8 Miles

TOWN HWY 13

4981538

641370

